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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER MINISTER DISCUSSES KURDISH EXPANSION INTO
NINEWA PROVINCE WITH AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) Summary: In a November 1 meeting with the Ambassador, former Minister of Industry and Minerals and current Council of Representatives (CoR) member from the cross-sectarian secular Iraqiyya party Osama Al-Najafi said Kurdish expansionism constitutes the most serious threat to Iraqi unity. He also criticized the Maliki government as weak and ineffective. End Summary.

Kurds Responsible for Divisions

[12](#). (C) Najafi said that Iraqis in the northern areas, specifically in Mosul, believe that Shi'a parties, in particular SCIRI and Dawa, as well as Al-Qaeda and Kurdish parties are responsible for the country's divisions. Of these three, Al-Najafi said, the Kurdish parties and the "Kurdish Project" represent the most serious threat to Iraq's unity. He expressed concern that Kurdish political groups are actively seeking to expand KRG boundaries and increase Kurdish presence in various cities in Diyala, Ninewa, and Ta'mim (Kirkuk) provinces. Their efforts, according to Al-Najafi, help Al-Qaeda and other armed groups by pushing people to join them in an effort to retaliate against the Kurds.

[13](#). (C) Al-Najafi asked the Ambassador to use his influence in the KRG to help "freeze" the Kurdish project and cited the Mosul Dam as an example of Kurdish expansionist policies. According to Al-Najafi, approximately 100 villages surround the dam. Of these villages approximately 10 are Kurdish. However, the Kurds are claiming the dam's eastern and western banks, as well as the water and electricity the dam produces. Al-Najafi also asked that the USG resist KRG pressure to arrest and detain politicians vocally opposing Kurdish actions. Finally, Al-Najafi requested USG support for early CoR elections. (Note: the next CoR elections are scheduled to take place in 2009. End Note)

Maliki Government Weak

[14](#). (C) Turning to the central government, Al-Najafi characterized Prime Minister Maliki's current government as "weak and ineffective." We are moving faster and faster towards a disaster, Al-Najafi warned, which the PM and the CoR are unable to stop. The Ambassador agreed that this is a difficult time for the GOI and it only emphasizes the need for Iraqiyya members to take a more active, organized role in Iraqi politics.

[15](#). (C) Bio Note: Osama Al-Najafi was elected to the CoR on Ayad Allawi's Iraqi National List (Iraqiyya). While his name suggests he is from Najaf in Southern Iraq, he was born in

Ninewa province, is the head of a prominent and influential family, and currently lives in Baghdad. He has argued against Kurdish expansion efforts in Mosul, including an inflammatory statement on September 25 in the CoR which caused members of the Kurdish Alliance to walk out of the session. End Bio Note.
KHALILZAD